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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN AGRICULTURE

A transcribed talk by Leslie A. Wheeler, Director of Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations, United States Department of Agriculture, Recorded, August 28, 1945  
Time: four minutes, 53 seconds.

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TRANSCRIPTION

The world is shrinking. It's smaller today than ever before. I'm speaking figuratively because of course it's just as far from the North Pole to the South Pole as ever, and I haven't heard of any decrease in the distance around the Equator.

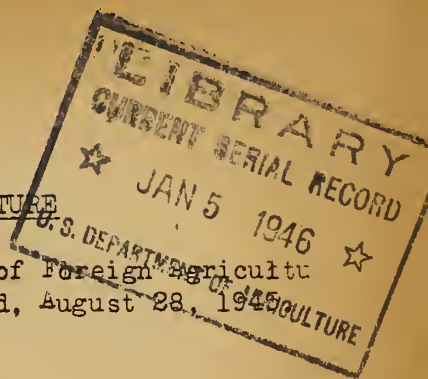
But overlooking the matter of physical dimensions, the world has grown smaller. Distances may be the same when measured in miles, but it doesn't take as long to get from one place to another as it did, even a few years ago. Communication has improved so much that it's now as easy to exchange knowledge and ideas with the people of other continents as it used to be for our forefathers to converse with friends and neighbors in their own little rural communities.

I can give a vivid example of what I mean by a recent personal experience. The airplane in which I travelled in returning from the recent Third Inter-American Conference on Agriculture at Caracas, Venezuela went by a somewhat roundabout route, from La Guaira, Venezuela to Miami, Florida in less than 12 hours. In recent years it would have taken an average steamship nearly a week. In the time of Columbus it would have taken at least a month.

At this Third Inter-American Conference on Agriculture at Caracas, representatives of all the American republics met to discuss plans for post-war improvement of agriculture and of the living standards of all the people of the Western Hemisphere.

This Conference was attended by agricultural workers, scientists and government officials of different nationalities but with the same objectives and purposes. It was an excellent example of the relatively new technique of international cooperation in planning for the economic betterment of all mankind. The United States delegation, was headed by Under Secretary of Agriculture, J. B. Hutson, and composed of leaders of farm organizations and agricultural colleges, and of federal officials. They joined with the groups from the other hemispheric countries in giving their best thought to the important issues that arose.

Many widely different specific questions confronted the conference, but they all fitted into the general, over-all problem of how farmers can best be assisted by readjusting their wartime operations to peacetime needs.





Discussions at the Third Inter-American Conference on Agriculture centered around important topics like these: farm credit, post-war crop adjustments, marketing and transportation, migration and colonization, greater production of food to improve dietary standards and the international exchange of agricultural data and statistics. Considerable attention also was given to latest improvements in farming methods and to reports of progress in agricultural research.

If some of our farmers who are listening could have been at the Caracas conference, I believe they would have been impressed with one fact. This was that the gathering was much like farm meetings we have right here in the United States. It dealt with precisely the same general problems -- farm credit, readjustment of production, and the like. There was, of course, one important difference and that was that four different languages were used: Spanish, Portuguese, French, and English. That was a handicap. But this handicap was overcome by the use of interpreters. And in spite of the language difficulty there did prevail an atmosphere of genuine neighborliness. The people who attended the meeting in Venezuela didn't come from the same township, county or state but they were friends and neighbors just the same, and the atmosphere of the sessions showed it. I don't mean there weren't any arguments -- there frequently are, even among neighbors here at home -- but they were in a friendly spirit and agreement was eventually reached on all major points.

Some of the resolutions adopted at the Caracas conference are significant guideposts to post-war agricultural reconversion in the Western Hemisphere.

The delegates agreed that lowering trade barriers would promote international trade, and recommended greater industrial production as a means of increasing consumption of agricultural products. They also suggested that the production of agricultural commodities should be directed toward the areas capable of producing them most efficiently.

All in all, the Third Inter-American Conference on Agriculture in Caracas, Venezuela was another milestone on the road toward the betterment of agriculture and the economic and social advancement of the Americas.

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Announcer's Opening and Closing

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OPENING

ANNOUNCER: (Live)

Good farmers are usually good neighbors. They're interested in the other fellow's problems and like to get together with their friends and talk over questions affecting their common welfare. We've been accustomed to that kind of friendly cooperation in our farming communities for a long time and now the 21 countries of the Western Hemisphere are showing the same cooperative spirit in seeking the answers to post-war agricultural and economic questions. Here is Mr. L. A. Wheeler, Director of the United States Department of Agriculture's Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations to tell us about it. Mr. Wheeler.....

CLOSING

ANNOUNCER: (LIVE)

Folks, that was Mr. L. A. Wheeler, Director of the United States Department of Agriculture's Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations telling us how the countries of the Western Hemisphere are cooperating to promote the advancement of agriculture and the economic betterment of their people.

